



THE NEW DOVER HERALD

March 2022

Vol. 187

A Ministry Newsletter of New Dover United Methodist Church

CHUCK'S CHURCH CHAT

“TO MARCH”

**Dear March, come in! How glad I am!
I looked for you before. Put down your hat —
You must have walked — How out of breath you are!
Dear March, how are you? And the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me,
I have so much to tell!**



Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Saints,

Grace to you and peace...

As the good poet Dickinson declares, it's March and "I have so much to tell!" As I'm writing this (on February 13th), after a two-month hiatus, live worship is set to begin with an evening service on Ash Wednesday, March 2nd. Hopefully live worship will continue uninterrupted from that point on. Then again, we've held out such hope before, haven't we? In the meantime, I thought I'd tell you a story about crazy happenings behind the scenes of one of our online worship broadcasts.

Now we all like to witness a *little* drama during our worship services don't we? Nobody wants a dull service, amen? It keeps the participants on their toes and keeps you, the congregation, glued to your screens. But just before our service on the last Saturday evening in January, the 29th, there was a bit more drama than we bargained for!

If you recall, that was the day of the big bomb-cyclone blizzard. Since it was the 5th Saturday of the month, Rosie was scheduled to preach that evening, but around 2:30 she texted to let me know she was stuck at home because her street had yet to be plowed. Since I'm right across the road from the church, and crossing New Dover successfully, while never guaranteed, was far safer than a snowy drive from Union, I told her not to worry; I would do the service. In the meantime I heard from Kyle Sanders, who was scheduled to lead praise that night, but who was also snowed in. I asked if he could record the praise songs in his dorm room and send me the link, and that's exactly what he did. Okay, one challenge overcome, but the drama was just beginning!

I was in my office scrambling to put together a last-minute sermon when, about five minutes before the service was scheduled to begin, I suddenly realized I was the only one in the church and that meant we had no one to run the broadcast from the balcony! I desperately texted Rosie to see if she knew who was scheduled that night. No answer. I was trying to figure out if there was some way I could both run the broadcast and at the same time lead the service when, turning to my left as I sprinted from the office, I witnessed a living miracle! Out of the teeth of the blizzard and up the sidewalk came Krisel Manglapus! Alleluia!!! The service would go on! It was sort of like when Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer saved Christmas!

Krisel smiled and told me that Rosie had contacted her just minutes before. We entered the sanctuary, I headed to the pulpit and she made her way up the aisle, into the narthex, and climbed the ladder to the balcony. Then, just as she fired up the equipment, guess who strides in? Rosie!! At the very last minute the snow-plow had arrived on her street and freed her to make the trip down the Parkway to Edison. With the two of them seated at the controls the show would go on! I stepped up to the pulpit, Rosie gave me the 5-4-3-2-1 hand signal, and we were on the air!

Aside from starting just a minute or so late, to those of you tuning in at home, everything no doubt appeared quite normal, but had you peaked behind the curtain you would have witnessed the miraculous transformation of chaos into order! But you know what, in one form or another, crazy things are happening behind the scenes every day at NDUMC!

Those of you who stop by during the week may drop into the office to see our Administrative Assistant, Trish, formatting and printing bulletins, newsletters, etc. You might run into our Sextant, Joe, vacuuming the sanctuary. Perhaps you'll witness treasurer, Michelle, writing checks and paying bills, or JoAnn, our Finance Chair, balancing the books each month. If you look into Wesley Hall on a Friday morning you'll see the volunteers of Bread Breakers packing and loading up hundreds of lunches. Any day of the week you might pull into the parking lot to see one of our Wawa drivers dropping off a load of sandwiches and side-dishes. Once inside you're liable to come upon our Trustee President, Jeff, his trusty supervisor (Karen!) by his side, fixing one thing or another. And the list goes on and on and on...

But as many as we have working behind the scenes (*and I don't have the space to list everyone*) we can always use more! Remember that our faith is not a once-a-week thing! Disciples are always in demand and the more we collectively put into our ministry the more positive change we will make in the world.

Saints, the season of Lent begins on the second day of March and runs to April 10th. Why not make it your Lenten discipline to offer one extra hour a week to God's service? Whether it's behind the scenes or in front of a crowd, what a difference that one hour will make!

Have a blessed March!

Chuck



KEEP US IN YOUR PRAYERS



Manny & Nora De La Paz
Pat & Brian
June Ebbets
Lulu Kamenas & family
Gail Engel
Service men & women
Veterans
Homeless, unemployed
& uninsured

All affected by Covid-19 and
their families
All Elderly of NDUMC

Pray for all those affected by Natural Disasters, those suffering with addictions, those suffering from depression, Victims of terrorism & violence, all national leaders, and all those serving at New Dover UMC.

All doctors, nurses, EMT, teachers, grocery store workers, janitors, and all other frontline workers. Thank you and God Bless.

If you wish to add anyone to the 2022 permanent prayer list, please contact Karen Rowland at krowland648@yahoo.com

FROM YOUR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

PLEASE JOIN US FOR PRAYER FELLOWSHIP EVERY
WEDNESDAY MORNING AT 10 AM

"PRAYER IS NOT ASKING. IT IS A
LONGING OF THE SOUL. IT IS
DAILY ADMISSION OF ONE'S
WEAKNESS. IT IS BETTER IN
PRAYER TO HAVE A HEART
WITHOUT WORDS THAN
WORDS WITHOUT A HEART."

~MAHATMA GANDHI~

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SERMON OF THE MONTH

“Good Grief”

Preached on Sunday, January 30, 2022

Matthew 5:4

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.’ Huh?! Say what, Jesus? Did I hear you right? Can you repeat that? **‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.’** How in the world, Jesus, is it blessed to be mourning?

The Greek word, *makarios*, which Jesus uses repeatedly in the Beatitudes, a word we usually translate as “*blessed are...*,” can just as easily be translated as “*happy are...*,” or “*fortunate are...*,” or “*well-off are...!*” “Happy” are those who grieve, you’re saying, Jesus? “Fortunate?” “Well-off?” Really? “Happy mourner” sounds like an oxymoron doesn’t it? Like jumbo shrimp, or cheerful pessimist, or working vacation!

Let me ask the congregation a question- when you’ve been in a state of mourning, which we all have, would you have described yourself as happy, or fortunate, or well-off, let alone blessed? Of course not. Mourning is one of, if not the, saddest emotions we humans can experience? When we are suffering through a painful loss what happens to us? We toss and turn in our fitful sleep, if we sleep at all. We lose our appetite, Our mind constantly wanders, we can’t function. Bereavement is capable of tearing our world apart. “*Blessed are those who mourn,*” you say? Good grief, Jesus! Or perhaps we should ask, what’s so good about grief? But hey, this is Jesus we’re talking about, so I suppose we ought to give him a chance to explain himself, right?

Passages focused on mourning occur numerous times in scripture, in fact there’s a whole section of the Torah giving specific instructions on how to properly mourn! According to the Bible, mourning is a big part of our life in the faith. How we mourn has a lot to do with who we are, who or what it is we mourn, and what we believe. Unlike our 21st century emotionally retentive society, feelings of grief were seldom publicly suppressed in biblical times. Those mourning the loss of a family member were given to shrieks, cries, and wails; they were expected to behave in such a manner! Beside the vocal outpouring, tearing of their garments, beating their breast, shaving their heads and putting on sackcloth, a burlap textured article of clothing that was beyond itchy was all part of the game! Not only that, but if a family felt they weren’t grieving sufficiently enough, they would hire professional mourners, often women, who would cry and wail out laments. (*Imagine how interesting a modern viewing would be if we still held to that custom!*)

Losing a family member wasn’t the only occasion where mourning was mentioned in scripture. It could follow a personal calamity, or the loss of a battle, or disasters such as drought or famine, or when a nation realized it’s sinfulness and feared the threat of divine judgment. There are numerous passages in the Bible when mourning is described in gut-wrenching detail:

Adam and Eve mourned the loss of their innocence in the Garden.

All of Israel mourned the death of Moses, who died just shy of the Promised Land.

At the death of his beloved son, King David cried out **“O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”**

In the book of Amos we hear God calling on all of Israel to mourn the fall of their nation:

“Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:

In all the squares there shall be wailing;

and in all the streets they shall say, ‘Alas! alas!’

They shall call the farmers to mourning,

and those skilled in lamentation, to wailing;”

In the gospels there are also incidents of mourning; we recall the crowd crying at the grave of Lazarus, where even Jesus wept for his friend’s loss.

Then there was Mary Magdalene mourning the absence of Jesus' body from the tomb. And throughout the New Testament, the early church was constantly mourning the loss of those who were persecuted, exiled, or executed for their faith in Christ.

So too in our own lives, mourning isn't confined to the death of a loved one. There are many events and occasions which might cause us to grieve. Could be the death of a respected community or national leader or famous person. This past week the region collectively mourned the loss of a young police officer. We often mourn the loss of a relationship, or the loss of a job. Maybe it's moving far away from your home, or mourning the loss of the lives we had before the pandemic. Amen?!

Now we certainly wouldn't describe any of these events as happy would we? Yet, Jesus says that those of us who mourn are blessed in some way. So if that's the case, let's see if we can discover what that is. I want to tell you a story of two funerals...

I often get calls from area funeral homes to lead memorial services for someone who died without having a church affiliation, or whose pastor was away at the time of the funeral. This past Thursday I was asked to officiate for a woman who died at the age of 63. I don't believe in doing "cookie-cutter" services for anyone who has passed through this life; a lifetime needs to be acknowledged, so whenever I get these calls I contact family members and try to get to know the person who passed, through the stories and descriptions of those who loved them. When I talked to the sister of the deceased, she described her sister as her "angel on earth," who gave all she had to help their family through many a tragedy and challenge in their lives, always opening her home to them in times of crisis, always putting their own lives ahead of her own.

The service took place at a local cemetery on that blustery, frigid, windy day. Given that and the fact that I was told many in the family lived far away, not to mention the pandemic, I doubted that many would attend the service. But when I arrived at the cemetery I had difficulty finding a parking space near the mausoleum where she would be interred! Once inside I witnessed dozens of family members, young and old, most of whom had driven across the miles to pay final respects and mourn the loss of one they held so dear. There were hugs, and tears, and stories of what she had meant for them in their lives, especially in times of hardship. It was so clear to anyone looking on, how much she would be missed. ***"Blessed are those who mourn....."***

But I also recall another service I performed many, many years ago, on an equally frigid day, at an old cemetery in a little town not far from where I grew up in South Jersey. This woman too had no church affiliation, but when I asked the funeral director whom I might contact in order to know something about her, he said that there was no one except a distant cousin, who arranged the service, and he really didn't have anything nice to say about his aunt! I nevertheless called the young man, and heard him describe his aunt as a bitter, spiteful, stingy, recluse who scorned her neighbors and had exiled herself from her family. The only redeeming thing he mentioned was that when her elderly sister became ill his aunt reluctantly took her into her home.

And so that was what I focused on as just the three of us, the distant cousin, the funeral director, and I stood at the graveside, and it was there I delivered the eulogy. After I finished and we were walking through the graves to our cars, the cousin leaned in and said to me, "Thanks, that was the nicest thing anyone's ever said about my aunt!" All I could think of was the words to the Beatles' song: *"Eleanor Rigby died in the church and was buried along with her name. Nobody came."* Perhaps we don't understand "Blessed are they that mourn," until we encounter a situation when there are none there to mourn?

It's like there is a direct relationship between love and mourning. The presence of love leads to mourning. But when love is absent, there is nothing there to mourn, is there? When we look around our world today, where love and compassion has often been displaced by fear, prejudice, and cynicism, I wonder who will be mourned, and who will never be missed.

In the movie based on the play, *"Inherit the Wind,"* there is a scene that illustrates this: Following the dramatic trial that challenged the teaching of evolution in public schools, the lawyer defending the John Scopes character faced off against the sarcastic, cynical journalist who failed to see what good could come out of such a dramatic event. The lawyer, confronted the journalist, asking, *"My God, don't you understand the meaning of what happened here today?"* To which the journalist replied, *"What happened here has no meaning..."* But the lawyer fired back, *"YOU have no meaning! You're like a ghost pointing an empty sleeve and smirking at everything people feel or want or struggle for! I pity youIsn't there anything? What touches you, what warms you? Every man has a dream. What do you dream about? What... what do you*

need? You don't need anything, do you? People, love, an idea, just to cling to? You poor slob! You're all alone. When you go to your grave, there won't be anybody to pull the grass up over your head. Nobody to mourn you. Nobody to give a damn. You're all alone."

When teaching at The Pennington School I once showed a high school class this very scene and then gave the students what must have seemed an odd, perhaps disturbing, request: I asked them to write their own obituaries! Not as they would be written at that time, but what would be written about them should they go on to live long, long lives. In other words, how would they be remembered? How deeply would they be mourned, or would they be mourned at all? Would they go on to live lives worthy of mourning?

I believe Jesus' offering of blessings to those who mourn leads us in a similar direction. Those of us who grieve are fortunate because we've been blessed by the love of the person we mourn. Without that love there would be no mourning. Without that love, in the words of the lawyer from *Inherit the Wind*, "*When you go to your grave, there won't be anybody to pull the grass up over your head. Nobody to mourn you. Nobody to give a damn.*"

Saints, none of us want to arrive at the end of our lives in such a fashion, do we? And so this second beatitude calls on us to consider the life that remains before us, and be determined to make it worthy of being mourned.





Opens Tuesday, March 29
at 7:30 am

If interested in volunteering or
being a vendor, contact Jeff
Rowland at 732-381-7904.



Ash Wednesday Service
March 2, 2022
7:00 pm in-person
in the sanctuary.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

We wish to thank everyone who contributed to our women veterans in Menlo Park nursing home. We delivered over 6 cartons of personal products, jewelry and other gifts for the ladies. We plan to buy additional gifts for them in the very near future. They appreciate all we are doing for them.

The first meeting of 2022 will be held on March 9, 2022 at 6:15pm. Come celebrate St. Patrick's Day with us and enjoy homemade soup, sandwiches and dessert. Our craft lady, Peggy, has an Easter surprise for all of us to make, which always makes for an enjoyable evening.

Come out for a evening of fun and friendship with us. All women of the church are invited to share the evening.

Any questions, please call Dianne (732-381-8688) or Peggy (732-388-2920).

Sincerely,

Dianne Petersen - UMW President

Confirmation Class 2022 Update

Confirmation Class 2022!

By Rosie Pang, Associate Pastor



Confirmation Class started on January 9th.

Confirmation is a public act and profession of their faith.

Public profession of faith

Although confirmation is not a sacrament in The United Methodist Church, it is an important marker along our spiritual journeys.

At baptism, we are initiated into the new covenant in Jesus Christ and membership in the Church, Christ's body in the world. For many, this happens when they are very young.

We recognize children are members of their own families, but no one expects them complete chores or more complex tasks in and outside of their boundaries. In the same way, "baptized are members of the Church — the family of faith — but are not yet capable of sharing everything involved in membership," as members of the church *By Water and the Spirit*, The United Methodist Church's official statement on baptism, teaches.

Confirmation is an opportunity to respond to the grace of God available to us, as acknowledged in baptism, and to promise to live as a person of faith. "What God offers us must be accepted in repentance and faith," *This Is Your Baptismal Liturgy* states. "Confirmation and reaffirmation are our responses of commitment, profession of faith, and rededication."

And unlike baptism, the confirmands are anointed with oil during Confirmation ceremony as a sign to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit in each of their lives. "It is the first time that persons publicly declare their intention to live out the vows of the baptismal covenant," Burton-Edwards teaches. "It is not intended to be the last time. It's just that confirmation is the label we put on the first time."

It is also a time for a congregation to celebrate their young people's commitment to "live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ," and to renew their commitment to do the same.

This year, New Dover's Confirmation class will collaborate with two other churches in the area, Centenary UMC in Metuchen and Trinity UMC in South Amboy as an

opportunity to connect with other confirmands and families to share their stories and faith to optimize their learning experience. While classes will take place in-person (may shift to virtual if Covid cases deem to incline risk) and virtually every 3 weeks or so in different church locations, the Confirmation Ceremony is to take place in each individual's church on the Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 2022. As Confirmation is more than an endeavor of each confirmand student or their families, let us support this year's class in love, prayers and frequent encouragement. One last note on the emphasis of congregational support for this act of faith is that as leaders and supporters, consider to serve as their spiritual mentors, prayer partners, and facilitators. Thank you in advance to Lisa A. Gilmore who will serve as lay delegate to the Confirmation Class of 2022.

Vows of a professing member

According to [Paragraph 217 of the Book of Discipline](#), the vows of professing members, including confirmands, are:

- To renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin;
- To accept the freedom and power God gives them to resist evil, injustice, and oppression;
- To confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put their whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;
- To remain faithful members of Christ's holy church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world;
- To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;
- To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness;
- To receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 6 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 11:15 Bell Choir Practice 4:30 Telugu Service	7 7:00pm Trustees	1 6-7:30pm GS 80105 7:30pm BS 44	2 10:00am Prayer Fellowship 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service	3 	4 	5 9:00am Kahboom Robotics 5pm Praise Service
13 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 11:15 Bell Choir Practice 4:30 Telugu Service	14 7pm Nurture	15 6-7:30pm GS 80105 7:30pm BS 44	9 10:00am Prayer Fellowship 6:30pm UMW	10 	11 	12 9:00am Kahboom Robotics 5pm Praise Service
20 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 11:15 Bell Choir Practice 4:30 Telugu Service	21 7:00pm Worship	22 7:30pm BS #44	16 10:00am Prayer Fellowship	17 	18 	19 9:00am Kahboom Robotics 5pm Praise Service
27 9:00am Sunday School 10:15am Worship 11:15 Bell Choir Practice 4:30 Telugu Service	28 7:00pm Council	29 7:30am-1:30pm Flea Market Opens 6-7:30p GS 80105 7:30pm BS #44	23 10:00am Prayer Fellowship	24 	25 	26 9:00am Kahboom Robotics 5pm Praise Service

March Birthdays

- 4 Sharon Gray
- 5 Brian Christian
- 7 Timothy Roth
- 8 Steven Castlegrant
- 10 Danny Mizak
Bolton Nyema
- 11 Mark Verdana
- 13 Sadie Chesney
Abraham Katkar
- 14 Christopher Sanders
- 17 Dawn Preston-Burnett
- 19 Jean Fletcher
- 20 Peter Burnett
- 22 Alyssa Sarno
- 31 Cecil Parmar

March Anniversaries

- 2 John & Marilyn Kimball
- 9 Ruzwalt & Nilpa Khristi
- 30 Wilson & Jesmina Christian



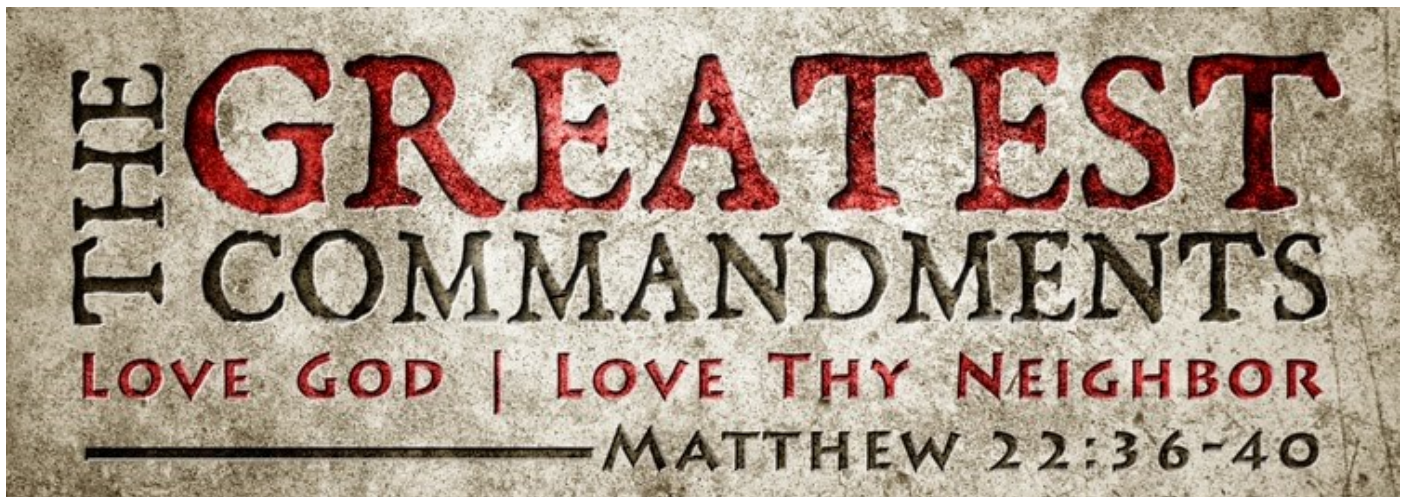
MEMBERSHIP CORNER

This article was written in the News Tribune many, many years ago, but still rings true today.

DON'T PERMIT A HARD WORLD TO HARDEN YOU

The circumstances of our day require us to have a stronger faith, It's not a time for the weak of heart, but of courage. These rapidly changing and challenging times can be so overwhelming that it can weaken our hearts and minds to the point of fatigue. The good news is, the creator of all is in control of our destinies. By whatever name you call God, take faith into your hearts and believe the best is yet to come. Though we may go through even darker times, these are but only temporary. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Don't believe in the doomsayers of our time, but lift up your hearts to God and believe. Think peaceful thoughts, meditate on God's peace, and allow it to dwell in you. This is how to change the world around us for the better, one person at a time. I know what I speak of isn't easy, but what worthwhile thing is easy? Realize our minds are like computers: garbage in, garbage out. Take time to reprogram your mind on the good things in life-such as family, a sense of community, humor, anything that clears your mind of the negative forces that surround us all. Turn off the television news when it becomes too much to bear. Watch cartoons, sitcoms, things that will make you laugh more. The truth is what we dwell on the most becomes our reality-a self-fulfilling prophecy if you will. Take notice of the company you keep. Do you feel comfortable around them, or do you feel uneasy? These are all things we can do to help ourselves though these ever-changing times we live in. Most importantly though, drop the hate and bigotry. Nothing will drag a person down more than hate. We live in a vast world with a multitude of individuals, each with uniqueness and potential. The truth of the matter is we are all created in the likeness of our creator. Those superficial things such as skin color, or where one's ancestors came from are just temporal things. We use them to create distance between one another, instead of celebrating our diversity. I suggest why not work to find what we all have in common with one another. I know it's tempting, in this world filled with rage, confusion and constant turmoil, to harden our hearts and become indifferent toward each other. I challenge each of us, myself included, not to let that happen. Is it really that hard to just accept each other as we are? Because the truth is, the only person we can truly change is ourselves. Let's decide from this day forward to be a part of the solution, and not part of the problem.

Albert F. Worth, Jr.



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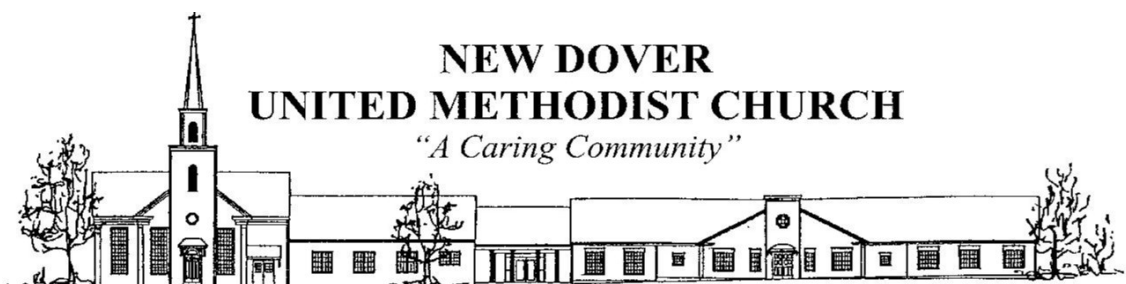
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"A Caring Community"

